



Vintage



👁 11 ✓ 4 ★ 2

Chapter 1 by Fanwizard

I always knew that I was a bit different.

Maybe it was the fact that I lived under the care of my auntie and grandparents instead of my actual parents.

Maybe it was the fact I always preferred vintage stuff over modern stuff, leading to a bedroom that had the appearance of a 20th century one.

Maybe it was the fact that I dressed like a girl from the 20th century, all the decades mixed together to make my daily outfit, naturally leading to a very different look than what you might expect from an eleven year old girl. ∞

My name is Hazel Lila Luna Love Westbrook, one of the few things my momma actually bothered to give me before she left.

But I've always hated the middle name of 'Love'. Who names a girl after a feeling? While you're at it, might as well name your other daughter 'Joy' or 'I'm not having a good day so leave me alone'.

Auntie Brooke always insists that my name is perfect, for the perfect girl. My grandmomma doesn't say much about it, choosing to withdraw her opinion, but my grandpoppa constantly tells me that I was named Love because I was loved.

So if I was loved so much, why did Momma leave?

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It wasn't like I missed her or anything, but I really wanted to know her, despite everything that she had and hadn't done.

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According to Auntie Brooke (who is Momma's younger sister), Momma ran off to be a flight attendant, never wanting to be a mom in the first place because she felt it wasn't the right time. She showed up on her parents' doorstep, holding a sleeping baby swaddled in blankets, handed me to them, then drove off in her car, all while I was sleeping.

Poppa had left before I was even born, figuring out that Momma was that indecisive person, and he was getting sick of having to follow her plans. They separated, he left, and Momma was left with a baby that she didn't want.

But Auntie Brooke always tells me that Momma left because it wasn't the right time to be a mother.

So when was it?

I flip open my journal, sit up, and grab a pen on my nightstand, reading through an old list that I made but haven't added anything else to because there was nothing else to write.

Everything I Know About My Momma

Momma's real name is Lily Lefebvre because she went back to her maiden name after Poppa and she separated.

She hadn't spoken to her own parents for over two years, until the day she dropped me off and didn't look back.

She had loved traveling and flying at a young age and had big dreams even though she grew up in a small town.

She was indecisive, always getting tired of one thing quickly and moving on to the next, part of the reason why she loved traveling.

Momma hadn't spoken with Auntie Brooke by choice despite Auntie Brooke's best efforts. She left me behind to pursue her own dreams.

I make lists. I make lists for comfort, I make lists to sort out my emotions, and I make lists to remember my dreams.

I carry around a journal dedicated solely to making lists. When I'm alone, I'll write down everything inside the pages. It's basically a written record of everything about me. No one has ever touched it. Not even Auntie Brooke or Grandmomma or Grandpoppa have touched it,

because they understand how important it is to me. And I hide it well enough that no bully can steal it and flush it down the toilet.

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A few years ago I heard from Auntie Brooke that Momma had passed away. I listened, even though I knew I was

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Auntie Brooke: *I'm worried about her. Kids her age shouldn't be writing facts in journals about their moms and dads.*

Grandmomma: *Maybe it's just a pre-teen phase.*

Grandpoppa: *Let kids be kids. We can motivate Hazel, but let her figure out her own way in the world or she'll never learn to do things by herself without us worrying about her 24/7.*

Grandmomma: *You're right. But sometimes, I wonder if Lily is ever coming back.*

Auntie Brooke: *You haven't heard from her for over ten years. No letters, no calls, not even a birthday card telling us that she's okay.*

Grandpoppa: *But she's still our daughter and your older sister. We're family.*

Auntie Brooke: *Family don't abandon each other and always stick together.*

I left after that, because of what Auntie Brooke said.

Family don't abandon each other and always stick together.

Because it made Momma sound like she was just the villain of the story, while I was the damsel in distress and Poppa was a bystander.

But maybe it's like that on purpose. Because there's no villain, hero, or innocent bystander in *my* story.

Chapter 2 by Fanwizard



"Morning, Hazel," Auntie Hope said. She's already dressed, ready for work, but always makes sure that I'm driven to school before leaving for work.

She walks over to the window, pushing it open and letting a morning breeze sway the curtains for a second before falling back. Auntie Hope leans out, closing her eyes and taking in a deep breath.

"Just smell that morning air," she said dreamily. Her eyes snapped back to reality, seeing me propped in bed, her pretty eyes softening. "Get up, sleepyhead. Grandpoppa made you his omelets." She winked, eyes twinkling, before leaning down and kissing my cheek, then walked out.

Auntie Hope was the person that could be anyone's mom. She had a smile for everyone, knew how someone was feeling and exactly what they needed, and lit up a room when she walked in.

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I dressed (in a high waisted denim skirt with three buttons down the middle, a white beaded top Auntie Hope found at Second Time Around, the secondhand store in the downtown area), found one of my favorite pair of shoes (black and white oxford saddle shoes), slipped my feet into them, twisted my hair up into a quick updo, then headed downstairs to breakfast.

Grandpoppa was sitting at the head of the table, drinking a cup of black coffee, Grandmomma sitting on his left, with her daily cup of tea. Auntie Hope was standing by the coffee machine, making herself a cappuccino.

"Morning, Hazel," Grandpoppa cheerfully said, sipping from his steaming mug. "Glad to see you're awake this morning for my world famous omelet."

The omelet was already set at my seat of the table, across from Grandpa and beside Auntie Hope and Grandmomma. It looked good, with cheese, tomato, green onion, and sweet peppers sprinkled in. Slices of pineapple were placed on a smaller plate beside it, and beside the pineapple was a glass of milk.

"Thanks, Grandpoppa," I gave him a quick kiss on his cheek. "It look amazing."

"Your grandmomma sort of helped," he laughed.

"Gathering the ingredients is essential to the creation of an omelet for my granddaughter."

Grandmomma pretended to be offended. "Besides, I doubt your grandpoppa could tell the difference between a sweet pepper and tomato when they're not sliced."

Grandmomma had lived almost sixty years, but she still had no talent in cooking. It was always Grandpoppa who was the chef of the family. So when Grandpoppa went on business trips, Auntie Hope took over cooking, knowing that Grandmomma had little to no skill in cooking. She could have burned water.

I, on the other hand, liked cooking sweets. I couldn't exactly make a meal for everyone, but I could make oatmeal, macaroni and cheese, green beans, a salad, but my specialty was brownies and cookies.

I experimented with them, adding various ingredients to them to see what the brownies would taste like. Grandmomma and Auntie Hope were my key tasters and opinions (mainly because Grandpoppa liked all sweets and always said they were lovely, giving me no real feedback). I had a special notebook set aside for recording recipes (especially ones made from scratch) and

taking pictures of the food.

I also liked designing clothes, drawing sketches of a dress or a shirt, adding words on the side to describe the outfit, then coloring it at the end. Mostly they were vintage, but there were a few modern, punk, futuristic and a splash of other cultures to make pages and pages of. I even drew pictures

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"Thanks, Grandmomma," I laughed, kissing her cheek. She smiled, more wrinkles surrounding her sparkling eyes, before using her hand to touch my cheek gently.

"Now go eat your omelet," Grandmomma said in a shooing gesture. "It's getting cold, and you can't delay your auntie any more than you have to."

"Love you all," I felt pride swelling up in my heart for the family I had right here in front of me; Grandpoppa chef who always made jokes, supportive Auntie Hope who was the mother I never had, and caring Grandmomma, who always attended my school events no matter how boring they were.

But that moment never lasts.

∞

Josephine was waiting at my locker when I arrived.

She's one of my best friends, a sarcastic yet smart kind of girl. Part time bibliophile, part time writer. When she was in a bad mood, she could be really negative, but most of the time, she was plain sarcastic. Josephine's full name is Josephine Stephanie Genevieve Catalina Hunter, a very long name, but much better than 'Love'.

"Make any new recipes lately?" she asked.

"I figured out last night the perfect amount of salt to add to make salted brownies. Auntie Hope loved them. Here, I brought you some," I swung my backpack off my shoulder, unzipped it, and took out a baggie of salted brownies.

Josephine and my other best friend, Summer, both try all of my recipes that I make. We usually go to my house twice a month, where we study and bake. Josephine can make decent chocolate chip cookies, but is more interested in reading about it than actually doing it.

"Awesomesauce. Thanks, Hazel. I'll eat them during lunch," Josephine promises. I start twisting open my locker, and take out my English and Social Studies notebook, placed right beside my cooking and lists journal.

"Cute outfit," she said. "I love the skirt and shoes."

Even though Josephine wasn't a vintage girl like me, she still appreciated and accepted my love of all things vintage. She didn't complain if I wore a 50s navy blue dress to the movies or a poodle skirt to the library or a pair of wrist length white lace gloves to her house to study. She

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∞

Right as Mrs. Teigen was closing the door, Summer rushed in.

Summer was my other best friend and could have been my twin sister. We had the same sense of humor, but we were opposites. She was outgoing and confident and I was quiet and shy. She had a tendency to go out of her comfort zone while I stayed perfectly inside. When Summer walked into the room, she was the center of attention, both intentionally and unintentionally at the same time.

"So glad you could join us, Miss Stone," Mrs. Teigen said dryly, raising one eyebrow. "Now, please, take a seat."

Summer, cheeks flushed, ran to her seat in the back of the room, one table away from mine. Her eyes sparkled when they met mine, and I knew that she had a fabulous story to tell me about something that happened last night.

Summer Pierchazla loved fashion. She didn't just draw it, she made it. When she was in second grade, she had already made a yellow wraparound ballet skirt. By fifth grade, she made an entire wardrobe full of clothes. By the summer between fifth and sixth grade, she finally got her own sewing machine.

Summer has her nana to thank, who used to be a professional fashion designer before retiring and teaching her only granddaughter the ins and outs of fashion. We had talked about the possibility of Summer in high school, and being in the production crew designing and altering costumes for plays.

Not only did Summer know exactly what she wanted to do in high school, she also knew what she wanted to do with the rest of her life. Apply to FIT, move to New York (because Summer had been itching to get out of our small town since she was seven), and start her own professional clothing company.

I have something to tell you, Summer mouthed.

I nodded and mouthed back, Tell me at lunch.

Even though we weren't supposed to, Summer, Josephine, and I sat wherever we wanted in the cafeteria, despite the cafeteria monitors' best efforts. On day one schedules, I only had one class with each of them, but on day two schedules, I had all my classes with them. Today was a

laying out the schedule was the best time to come up with what had happened recently.

And now I will be collecting you in my collection. I'm not going to be another one of those days.

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"Pick up the pace, slowpoke!" Coach Schmetz bellowed. "Don't be such wimps! You're almost seventh graders!"

I took a deep breath, gasping for air. Coach Schmetiz always pushed us to our hardest, until I either (nearly) passed out or vomited. My lungs burned, and I could have have been drowning in my own sweat.

“Keep those sprints up! Thirty seconds!”

My legs were jelly and my side burned. My mouth had the taste of metallic, but I forced myself to go faster. A whole line of boys cut in front of me, not appearing to be winded, which was not humanly possible.

“And time!” Coach Schmetiz blew his whistles long and hard, shrill and cutting through the air like it was glass. “You’ll have to do better next time,” he said disapprovingly. “Some of you were slowing down at thirty seconds.”

I sighed. Only one hour and twenty-six minutes left to go.

I was in the kitchen, making M&M cookies, my cooking journal open on the counter as I stirred the batter and hummed along to the vintage radio set in the kitchen, tuned to one of my favorite stations.

It was seven, and Auntie Hope had already washed the dinner dishes; lasagna. I pressed the M&M’s in the raw cookie dough, then shoved the tray into the oven, turning the timer to ten minutes, just like any other night.

It’s also the perfect scenario in some movie, when the main character, a girl, is doing her daily activities but something changes.

That’s just in the movies, right?

But this is the part where everything changes.

∞

There’s a knock at the door. Grandmomma, who had been doing a crossword puzzle on the couch, got up to open the door.

“Hello?” Grandmomma asked.

“Is this the residence of Hazel Westbrook?” this came from a male voice, deep and confident, with an hint of unwavering politeness, but official sounding.

I froze from my place on the counter, my pen landing on my journal softly. Who was asking? How did they know me?

“Who would like to know?” Grandmomma asked calmly.

“I’m Sergeant Jackson.”

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and we just sat there on the couch, facing the two officers.

"It's so nice to meet you, Sergeant Jackson," Auntie Hope said politely. "Is there a reason behind your visit?"

Sergeant Jackson, and his other companion (who I hadn't learned the name of) studied me intently. He had storm gray eyes, just like the color the sky turned during a thunderstorm. "I've come to see Hazel Westbrook."

"You've previously stated that," Auntie Hope informed.

"I've come by the request of Lillian Hemmings."

The name of Momma instantly froze everyone in the room.

"That's my sister," Auntie Hope quietly told Sergeant Jackson in a hushed tone. "What did she request?"

"She recently requested for custody rights of Hazel Westbrook," he glanced at his notebook in his hand, "her daughter."

This time, Grandmomma spoke up. "Around eleven years ago, Lillian appeared on my doorstep of this very house, holding a baby, and telling me that she didn't want Hazel and it would be my responsibility to take care of Hazel since Lillian hadn't contacted Hazel's poppa in years. She placed Hazel in my arms and drove off. My husband, my younger daughter, Hope, and I have custody rights of Hazel."

"You have custody rights of Hazel until further notice," Sergeant Jackson corrected. "This is the further notice."

"You mean, you've come to take Hazel away to the mother that she's never met?" Grandpoppa said.

"Our report states Lillian has gone through years of alcohol and drug abuse, in and out of rehab several times, but she's assured me that she's straightened out her life enough that she wants her daughter back."

Alcohol and drug abuse? The words ran through my mind as I stared at Sergeant Jackson. She wanted me back?

"Lillian hasn't contacted us in over eleven years. We thought she was dead," Auntie Hope broke in. "Now she can suddenly pop out of the blue and ask for the daughter that would have been

placed in a foster home if we had it been around. Honestly, she missed almost all of Hazel's childhood."

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"Lillian is the legal and biological mother of Hazel," Grandpoppa stated flatly. "Even though according to Miss Hemmings, she's straightened out her life enough that she wants her daughter."

"What about her father?" Grandpoppa interjected.

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